

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 0520

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MX

SUBJ: EFFERVESCENCE IN THE PRI

1. ENCOMPASSING AT IT DOES FACTIONS RANGING FROM INTELLECTUALS TO CAMPESINOS, AND FROM BUSINESSMEN TO WORKERS, PERHAPS IT SHOULD COME AS NO SURPRISE THAT THE PRI OCCASIONALLY HAS DIFFICULTY MAINTAINING AN OUTWARD APPSARANCE OF UNITY. BEYOND THE COMMON RHETORICAL ADHERENCE TO THE "CONTINUING REVOLUTIONS", PRI MEMBERS ARE MORE HETRO THAN HOMOGENEOUS. UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES, PART DISCIPLINE WORKS WELL TO SUBMERGE INTRAPARTY DIFFERENCES. DURING A PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN, UNITY IS NEEDED MOST, BUT THIS IS PRECISELY WHEN IN-FIGHTING FOR A LARGER SHARE OF THE PATRONAGE PIE TAKES PLACE.

2. THE PRI ENTERED THIS CAMPAIGN WITH SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF ITS MEMBERSHIP DISGRUNTLED BY THE FAILURE OF MOYA AND CERVANTES DEL RIO TO WIN CANDIDACY. PARTY LEADERSHIP CHANGED AT THE SAME TIME, AND ALTHOUGH THE NEW DIRECTORS WERE EXPERIENCED POLITICALS, A SETTling-IN PERIOD WAS INEVITABLE. NONETHELESS, IT HAS BEEN ONLY RECENTLY THAT DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE PARTY HAVE BEEN VOICED PUBLICLY WITH SOME FREQUENCY.

3. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, SEVERAL DEBATES HAVE BEEN
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ONGOING CONCURRENTLY.

A. WORKERS SECTOR FIGHTS FOR MORE ELECTED POSITIONS:

THE CAMPAIGN HAD BARELY GOTTEN OFF THE GROUND BEFORE CTM BOS FIDEL VELAZQUEZ COMPLAINED PUBLICLY THAT THE POPULAR AND CAMPESINO SECTORS WERE ELBOWING ASIDE WORKERS FROM THEIR RIGHTFUL PLACE IN THE JLP CAMPAIGN. THIS EMBARRASSED PRI PRESIDENT MUNOZ LEDO (FORMER LABOR SECRETARY) WHO WITHIN DAYS WAS PHOTOGRAPHED GENUINELY EMBRACING AN UNSMILING VELAZQUEZ. MORE RECENTLY MUNOZ SAID THAT "THE RESURGENCE OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT WILL HELP US (THE PRI) AVOID MISTAKES IN SELECTING OUR CANDIDATES". MESSAGE -- TAKE IT EASY, YOU'LL GET YOUR SHARE.

B. WOMEN DEMAND GREATER REPRESENTATION: IN A MEETING JANUARY 12 WITH JLP, SOME FIVE HUNDRED WOMEN SUBJECTED THE CANDIDATE TO SEVERAL HOURS OF VARIOUS DEMANDS, THE COMMON FACTOR BEING THEIR INSISTENCE THAT WOMEN HAVE A LARGER VOICE IN DETERMINING PUBLIC POLICY. A DEBATE BETWEEN TWO WOMEN LED LIC. SILVIA HERNANDEZ, A LEADER IN THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT HERE, TO CALL FOR AN END TO ALL-FEMALE MEETINGS WITH THE CANDIDATE. "WE WANT TO DEBATE THE MALE POLITICIANS", SHE SAID. JLP AGREED TO SUCH AN ENCOUNTER.

C. CAMPESINOS KEEP PRESSURE ON FOR LAND DISTRIBUTION: WHILE THE OPPOSITION PAN HAS MADE STEADY GAINS IN URBAN AREAS, THE PRI HAS ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO COUNT ON (LITERALLY) 99 PERCENT OF THE RURAL VOTE. THIS IS THE CAMPESINO SECTOR'S GREATEST LEVER AND IT IS BEING USED TO THE HILT. AFTER SMALL PROPERTY OWNERS WON A PRIVATE, VERBAL ASSURANCE FROM PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA IN DECEMBER THAT THE GOM WOULD PROCEED SLOWLY IN SONORA AND SINALOA, AGRARIAN GROUPS MOUNTED A SECOND OFFENSIVE. AT A NATIONAL MEETING OF THE (NOMINALLY) INDEPENDENT CAMPESINOS' CENTRAL, LEADER GARZON SANTIBANEZ THREATENED THAT CAMPESINOS WOULD INVADE SOME THREE MILLION HECTARES IF THESE WERE NOT BROKEN UP AND DISTRIBUTED BY THE END OF THE YEAR.

D. INTELLECTUAL DEBATE PRODUCES CHAIN REACTION:
RESPONDING TO CRITICISM FROM LEFTIST COLUMNIST GASTON
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GARCIA CANTU THAT HE HAD SOLD OUT TO THE GOVERNMENT, MEXICAN AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE CARLOS FUENTES DEFENDED HIS PARTICIPATION IN THE ECHEVERRIA GOVERNMENT IN TERMS WHICH FOLLOWERS OF FORMER PRESIDENT DIAZ ORDAZ FOUND OFFENSIVE. FORMER PRI PRESIDENT ALFONSO MARTINEZ DOMINGUEZ LABELED FUENTES' REMARKS HYPOCRICAL AND OPPORTUNISTIC. OTHERS JUMPED INTO THE FRAY AND THERE IS PRESENTLY ONGOING A RATHER

UNFOCUSED BUT HEATED DEBATE WHETHER THE PRI IS TRULY
REVOLUTIONARY OR NOT.

4. COMMENT: CONTAINING THIS EFFERVESCENCE WITHIN
ACCEPTABLE LIMITS IS THE JOB OF PRI PRESIDENT MUNOZ LEDO.
IN A CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFFS JAN 13, A JLP CONFIDANT
SAID THE PRESIDENT HAD SPECIFICALLY DELEGATED THIS RE-
SPONSIBILITY TO MUNOX. JLP'S TASK (AND HOPE) IS TO REMAIN
ABOVE THE BATTLE.

WE DO NOT THINK THE CURRENT IN-FIGHTING POSES ANY
REAL THREAT TO PRI UNITY, AT LEAST AT PRESENT LEVELS.
BUT WE WOULD LIKE TO POINT OUT AGAIN (AS IN MEXICO 8975,
OCT 10) THAT THIS TRANSITION PERIOD IS ONE WITH INHERENT
POLITICAL STRESSES MADE MORE STRAINED IN THIS SUCCESSION
BY THE PERSONALITY OF PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA. FOR THESE
REASONS, THE SITUATION DESERVES TO BE WATCHED.
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